

THE LONG WINTERS

Condensed from the Oral History of LaDrue Dorton

My first impression of how long the snowy and cold weather would last was before I started to school. I suppose it was because I didn't go outside unless I had to. I was too young to help with the outside chores, so generally, the only times I went out was to visit the outside toilet and to church on Sundays, both of which I hated. I still remember how cold the toilet seat was and how long the church services seemed when I didn't understand what they were talking about.

I can also remember how cold the bedding felt when I first got in bed, although sometimes Grandmother would warm it up with a hot water bottle when it was bitterly cold and the windows frosted over.

After I started to attend school I was bothered more by the snow than by the cold weather. When there was a fresh snowfall a man with a horse pulling a V-shaped device would plow the sidewalks. We lived only a city block and a half from the school if I cut through the school yard, but it was about three blocks if I followed the sidewalk, so I would generally cut through.

If there had been a blizzard and the snow drifts were deep, it was pretty hard going for us little kids. Sometimes the bigger kids would break trail, so to speak, but usually if there more than one, the others would step in the leader's footprints so it didn't help us little kids much because we couldn't match their strides.

We children did have some enjoyment from the snowfall, making snowmen and snow forts stocked with snow balls when the temperature was right. (If it got too cold the snow was too dry to pack). I also had some fun coasting down hills on my sled and being a spectator when someone was dared to put his tongue on a sleigh runner.

When I got older and bigger, I was able to cope with winter season a little better. The snow didn't seem so deep or the cold so intense, but the winters still seemed just as long.